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ABSTRACT

This book presents a theoretical framework that weaves together three threads: (1) the importance of play in the social, psychological, and intellectual development of children; (2) the human need for personal power and the gratification that challenge in active learning experiences brings to one's feelings of self-worth; and (3) the imperative of respect for children--respect for them and for their choices. The position is taken that when certain conditions exist in a classroom, children become empowered by increasing their sense of self-worth, self-respect, and intellectual competence. Outlining teaching strategies and curriculum practices that enable children to develop a "can-do" spirit, the book offers a model for structuring the early childhood classroom built on an approach to teaching for thinking called "play-debriefing-replay." Following a section on perspectives on empowerment in children, the book is divided into sections covering activities before play, during play, and after play. The chapters are: (1) "The Can-Do Child"; (2) "The Can-Do Classroom"; (3) "The Teacher Decides"; (4) "Organizing the Can-Do Classroom"; (5) "Preparing Children for the Can-Do Classroom"; (6) "Curriculum for Serious Players"; (7) "Serious Play in Science"; (8) "Serious Play in Social Studies"; (9) "Serious Play in Mathematics"; (10) "Serious Play in the Language Arts"; (11) "Creative Play Opportunities"; (13) "Evaluation of Serious Players." Appendices (13) "Appendixes offer Evaluation of Serious Players." Appendices offer a list of materials for a "Can-Do Classroom" and teacher self-study tools. Contains 62 references. (AMC)

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